

TESTIMONY BEFORE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

RAISED BILL NO. 384: AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION

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The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents all of the superintendents of schools in the state and the members of superintendents cabinets supports Raised Bill No. 384: An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation but has a concern about what might result in connection with the implementation of a specific component of the bill.

The components which CAPSS supports are the following.

- **The requirement that every student enrolled in a teacher preparation program spend a minimum number of hours student teaching, beginning in the student's first year in the program and continuing every year thereafter, including a certain number of ours working with special education and gifted students.** CAPSS supports this component because the organization is convinced that prospective teachers need to spend much more time actually working in classrooms than they do presently and much less time as students in classrooms themselves. Our conviction is based on what we know is the value of clinically based preparation programs in which participants actually do in a supervised setting the work that they are being prepared to do independently and in which participants do classroom work that is based on the practice experience that they gain in the field.
- **The requirement that candidates entering a program of teacher preparation meet the requirements of the academic programs in the subject areas in which the students will teach.** For relatively, obvious reasons, it is important for teachers to be well grounded in the subject matter that they will be teaching.
- **The requirement that institutions that offer programs of teacher preparation provide candidates with information regarding subject and geographic areas in which teacher shortages exist and encourage candidates to seek teaching jobs in these subject and geographic areas.** Anything that can be done to alleviate the problems caused by subject area and geographic location shortages should be attempted.

The concern that CAPSS has is with reference to the requirement that candidates entering teacher preparation programs have a grade point average of at least 3.00. Any strategy that will result in teachers with relatively high academic ability and achievement is laudable. It needs to be kept in mind, however, that if standards are raised without increasing the attractiveness of a profession, the result is usually a shortage of people in the profession. This is to be particularly kept in mind during this time when there are a number of calls for freezing salary levels for teachers and for decreasing the potential retirement pensions for them as well.

I would be happy to discuss this with you in person.

